

Recognizing a Healthy Church

Alive!



Three Crucial Questions

- 1) What is the difference between a church & a Christian gathering?
- 2) What is the difference between a true church & a false church?
- 3) What is the difference between a weak, unhealthy, true church & a strong, healthy true church?

Founded on the Scripture

- **Act 20:32** "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."
- **Rom. 16:17** Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.
- **1 Cor. 2:10-14**
- **1 Th. 2:13** For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.
- **2 Th. 2:15** So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.
- **2 Th. 3:14** If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.
- **1 Tim. 3:15** I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

Founded on the Scripture

- Implications
 - 1) A full confidence in the sufficiency of Scripture.
 - 2) The regular practice of expository preaching
 - 3) A deep concern about correct, biblical theology
 - 4) An obvious effort to consistently practice the Word

Captivated by God's Transcendence

- Define *transcendence*: "Being above and independent of the material universe. Surpassing others; preeminent or supreme."
- Thesaurus on *transcendent*: magnificent, extraordinary, unparalleled, unrivaled, unequalled, unsurpassed, incomparable, unique, superior, supreme, paramount, foremost, utmost, second to none.

Captivated by God's Transcendence

- **Eph. 3:10** so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*.
- **Eph. 3:21** to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.
- **1 Tim. 1:17** Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.
- **1 Tim. 3:15** in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.
- **1 Tim. 5:21** I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of *His* chosen angels, to maintain these *principles* without bias, doing nothing in a *spirit* of partiality.
- **1 Tim. 6:13-16**

Captivated by God's Transcendence

- Implications
 - 1) In private conversation
 - 2) In the Corporate Worship
 - a) How important is it?
 - b) Who is the focus?
 - c) How involved are the individuals in singing and worshipping?
 - 3) In the view of God's Sovereignty

Centered on Christ

- **Matt. 16:18** "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.
- **Eph. 1:3-14**
- **Eph. 4:15-16** we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.
- **Phil. 3:3** we are the *true* circumcision, who...glory in Christ Jesus.
- **Col. 1:18-29**

Centered on Christ

- Implications
 - 1) A burning devotion to Christ
 - 2) Constant reference to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 3) A deeper concern for what pleases Christ than pleasing men.
 - **Gal 1:10** For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

Gripped by the Gospel

- **Rom. 1:16-17**
- **Rom. 3:21ff**
- **Gal. 1:6-9**
- **Phil. 3:1ff**
- **2 Cor. 5:18-21**

Gripped by the Gospel

- Implications
 - 1) The gospel is clearly and biblically defined.
 - 2) The people are actively evangelistic.

Directed toward Holiness

- **1 Cor. 3:16-17** Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? ... the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.
- **Eph. 2:21** in [Christ] the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord.
- **Eph. 5:25-27** Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.
- **Rev. 19:8** It was given to her [the church] to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Directed toward Holiness

- Implications
 - 1) They require a profession of faith for membership.
 - 2) They insist on the reality of a changed life.
 - 3) They faithfully practice church discipline.

Filled with Love

- **John 13:34-35** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
- **1 Cor. 16:14** Let all that you do be done in love.
- **Col. 3:14** Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.
- **1 Th. 3:12-13** may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also *do* for you; so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.
- **1 Th. 4:9-10** Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more.
- **2 Th. 1:3** We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater.
- **1 Tim. 1:5** But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.
- **1 Pet. 1:22** Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

Filled with Love

- Implications
 - 1) The members enjoy one another in fellowship.
 - 2) The members serve one another in practical ways.

Immersed in the Life of the Church

- The Reasons the Church Matters:
 - The Example of the NT believers
 - The Teaching & Pattern of the Apostles
 - The Commands of the NT
 - The Priority of Christ
 - **Matt. 16:18** "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church."

Immersed in the Life of the Church

- Implications
 - 1) They understand that their lives should be focused on the church.
 - 2) They embrace a biblical philosophy of ministry in the church.
 - Christ appoints the leaders of the church (4:11)
 - The leaders equip the members of the church (4:12a) – "for the equipping of the saints"; spiritual leaders primarily have two tools at their disposal to equip the saints: teaching them the Word of God and prayer for them that God would equip them as they hear and respond to his Word.
 - The members accomplish the service of the church (4:12b) – "for the work of service"
 - The outcome produces the growth of the church (4:12c) – "to the building up of the body of Christ"
 - 3) They are led by a biblically qualified leadership.
 - 4) They practice the ordinances in a biblical manner.

How Did our Church Do?

- Founded on Scripture
- Captivated by God's Transcendence
- Centered on Christ
- Gripped by the Gospel
- Directed toward Holiness
- Filled with Love
- Immersed in the Life of the Church